

943 RESCUE GROUP



MISSION

LINEAGE

943 Troop Carrier Group, Medium established and activated in the Reserve, 28 Dec 1962
Organized, 17 Jan 1963
Redesignated 943 Tactical Airlift Group, 1 Jul 1967
Inactivated, 25 Apr 1969
Redesignated 943 Military Airlift Group (Associate), 31 Jul 1969
Activated in the Reserve, 25 Sep 1969
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1973
Redesignated 943 Tactical Airlift Group, 8 Jan 1985
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Apr 1985
Redesignated 943 Airlift Group, 1 Feb 1992
Inactivated, 30 Jun 1993
Redesignated 943 Rescue Group, 13 Jan 2005
Activated in the Reserve, 12 Feb 2005

STATIONS

March AFB, CA, 17 Jan 1963-25 Apr 1969
Charleston AFB, SC, 25 Sep 1969-1 Jul 1973
March AFB, CA, 1 Apr 1985-30 Jun 1993
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 12 Feb 2005

ASSIGNMENTS

452 Troop Carrier (later, 452 Military Airlift) Wing, 17 Jan 1963-25 Apr 1969
514 Military Airlift Wing (Associate), 25 Sep 1969-1 Jul 1973

302 Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Apr 1985

445 Airlift Wing (Associate) (later, 445 Airlift Wing), 1 Feb 1992-30 Jun 1993

920 Rescue Wing, 12 Feb 2005

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-119, 1963-1969

C-141, 1969-1973

C-5, 1973

C-130, 1985-1993

HH-60, 2005

COMMANDERS

LTC William Lyon, 1963

LTC Richard W. McFarlane, 1968-25 Apr 1969

Col William A. Willis, 25 Sep 1969

Col Richard J. Boyle, 1970

Col Richard P. McFarland, 1 Aug 1971-1 Jul 1973

Col Clayton H. Ford Jr., 1 Apr 1985

LTC Jack B. Bush, 10 Sep 1989

LTC Bernard J. Pieczynski, 17 Nov 1990

LTC Randall W. Young, 11 Mar 1992

Unkn, 1 Jan-30 Jun 1993

Col Robert Dunn

Col Mike Shook

Col Harold L. Maxwell

Col Michael G. Shook, 12 Feb 2005

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

13 Jun 1970-30 Jun 1972

1 Jul 1972-30 Jun 1973

1 Jan 1990-31 Dec 1991

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

15 Sep 1969-28 Jan 1973

EMBLEM



Approved, 13 Aug 1969



Azure, in base a lightning flash fesswise Or, surmounted by a Pegasus (a winged steed of Greek mythology), regardant passant wings elevated and addorsed Argent, detailed Sable and Silver Gray eyed of the field. In chief sixteen mullets arched nine four and three of the second, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "943D RESCUE GROUP" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The winged Pegasus and lightning flash represent the power and quick strike capabilities of the Combat Rescue Mission and personify the spirit and determination of the Rescue Group. The stars symbolize the readiness, day or night to perform the mission "That Others May Live." (Approved, 22 Feb 2006)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

During the 943d Tactical Airlift Group's Air Force Reserve career, the unit has gone through several mission and geographical relocation changes. The 943d was organized as a troop carrier group (medium), at March AFB, California on 17 January 1963. It was redesignated as tactical airlift in July 1967 and inactivated on 25 April 1969. It was redesignated and activated as a military airlift group (associate) on 25 September 1969 at Charleston AFB, South Carolina. Inactivated on 1 July 1973, the group was activated again as a tactical airlift group at March AFB, its original home, on 1 April 1985.

The 943d Troop Carrier Group's organization in 1963 came about as part of the Continental Air Command (CONAC) reorganization in that year of its fifteen troop carrier wings. Because of difficulties encountered during the Berlin mobilization in 1961, the gaining Tactical Air Command sought through the reorganization to have greater flexibility in recalling units. Individual flying units could now be recalled without having to involve other units from the group or wing. Under each wing were self-supported groups, each of which had its own troop carrier squadron, combat support squadron, material squadron, tactical dispensary, and aerial port unit. The 943d was collocated with its parent wing, the 452d Troop Carrier Wing at March AFB, and its subordinate flying unit was the 729th Troop Carrier Squadron equipped with C-119s.

The 943d's first commander, Maj. William Lyon, faced some unique issues before the unit could engage in a full set of activities. As part of the 452d Troop Carrier Wing, training activities had to be arranged differently from other Air Force Reserve troop carrier units. The 452d's headquarters and three of the four subordinate troop carrier groups were all located at March AFB. Each group trained on a different weekend which placed heavy demands on base facilities.

Another difference was that each group was authorized its own shop equipment. Previously, the consolidated aircraft maintenance squadron supported wing needs. Warehouse space was needed to store each unit's equipment. These obstacles notwithstanding, the 943d soon began carrying out a full training schedule. Besides taking part in annual summer encampments, the unit participated in major exercises. In July 1964, the 943d and 944th Troop Carrier Groups participated in the Alaska Command's exercise Arctic Shore VI. The exercise's objective was to airland U.S. Army forces from Eielson AFB, to McGrath Airport, Alaska. Of the twenty-seven aircraft deployed for the exercise, fourteen came from the 943d. All together, the 943d and 944th flew 237 hours, and airlifted 437 troops and 90.6 tons of equipment.

In 1965, aircrews of the 943d demonstrated their ability to respond to real-world contingencies. In response to civil disorder in the Dominican Republic, President Lyndon B. Johnson dispatched American armed forces to quell the conflict and protect American lives. Due to the active force's heavy worldwide airlift commitments. Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units participated heavily in Operation Power Pack. A year later, the 943d participated in Operation Combat Leave, the Air Force operation that transported personnel on leave to and from Southeast Asia during labor strikes at five major airlines.

Between 10 July and 7 September 1966, the 943d flew 81 missions, 193.8 hours, and carried 1,417 passengers. The 943d's C-119s normally flew the following route: March AFB, Castle AFB, Travis AFB, (all in California), Kingsley Field (Klamath Falls, Oregon), Portland MAP, Oregon to McChord AFB, Washington with the reverse route flown the next day. In December 1967, the 943d, which had been

redesignated as a tactical airlift group on 1 July of that year, participated in a domestic humanitarian airlift operation. The 943d and other 452d flying units took part in Operation Haylift which provided urgently needed hay to starving livestock on Indian reservations in southwest United States. By late 1968, the 943d, now under the command of Lt. Col. Richard W. McFarlane, began to wind down operations in anticipation of its inactivation scheduled for spring of 1969. On 1 December 1968, all tactical requirements were rescinded and the 943d was inactivated on 25 Apr 1969.

On 25 September 1969, the 943d was activated at a new location, Charleston AFB, South Carolina and with a new mission, military airlift as part of the Reserve's associate program. The 943d, under the command of Col. William A. Willis, and its subordinate units represented the first associate program presence in the southeast United States. The 943d's parent unit was the 514th Military Airlift Wing (Associate), McGuire AFB, New Jersey. Six units were assigned to the 943d: 943d Headquarters Squadron, 300th Military Airlift Squadron, 943d Support Squadron, 943d Material Squadron, 943d Communications Flight, and the 943d Aerial Port Flight. As an associate unit, the 943d did not have any C-141S assigned, its 300th Military Airlift Squadron flew those owned by its active duty counterpart at Charleston AFB, the 437th Military Airlift Wing.

The 943d quickly carried out an active recruiting program. These efforts were so successful that during unit activation ceremonies on 27 September, an all-Reserve crew flew a mission to Panama. Aircrew training and familiarization in the C-141 was soon accomplished and by late November 1969, the 300th Military Airlift Squadron, under the command of Lt. Col. Knox R. Handy, flew an all-Reserve crew mission to Southeast Asia. This was the beginning of an extensive involvement in the Southeast Asia conflict which would win for the 943d Military Airlift Group (Associate) a Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm for the period 15 September 1969 through 28 January 1973.

In 1970, the 943d underwent major changes. On 5 July, Col. Richard J. Boyle became group commander replacing Colonel Willis. On 25 September, the 701st Military Airlift Squadron (Associate) under the command of Lt. Col. Clarence E. Horton was activated and assigned to the group. Manning for the new squadron was greatly assisted by the transfer of 26 pilots, 13 navigators, 5 flight engineers, and 14 loadmasters from the 300th Military Airlift Squadron to the new unit. To support the 701st, the 943d Material Squadron's authorized strength increased from 236 to 470. The 943d Aerial Port Flight also increased personnel authorizations which required additional recruiting efforts. On 1 February 1971, the 31st Aeromedical Evacuation Flight moved from McClellan AFB, California to Charleston AFB, was reorganized and assigned to the 943d Military Airlift Group (Associate). Later, on 1 December, the 31st was inactivated and concurrently activated as an aeromedical evacuation squadron. Manning authorization increased nearly threefold from 48 to 132.

The 943d underwent another change of command in the summer of 1971. On 1 August, Col. Richard P. MacFarland, who had commanded the 944th Military Airlift Group at Norton AFB, California, as the first associate airlift unit, assumed command. Later, in November, Lt. Col. David Guminski replaced Col. Clarence E. Horton as commander, 701st Military Airlift Squadron (Associate). In March 1972, Maj. Donald C. Hart replaced Lt. Col. Handy as commander, 300th Military Airlift Squadron (Associate) and by the end of the year, Maj. Ronald W. Hull became squadron commander. Operationally, the 943d's flying units pursued full schedules. In mid-August 1971, the 31st Aeromedical Evacuation Flight became responsible for aeromedical evacuation missions from Howard AFB, Canal Zone through Kindley Naval Air Station, Bermuda to Andrews AFB, Maryland. Additionally, in late September, Col. Horton, commander of the 701st Military Airlift Squadron, flew a mission to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska in support of President Richard M. Nixon's meeting with Emperor Hirohito of Japan.

On 1 October 1972, after several postponements, the 707th Military Airlift Squadron (Associate) was activated and became the 943d's third flying squadron. In early February 1973, Maj. Jackie L. Gates assumed command of the 707th. The squadron, however, was not programmed to carry out flying operations until the fourth quarter of fiscal 1973 when the 300th Military Airlift Squadron (Associate) converted to C-5 flying operations. The planned mission change, however, did not take place. Headquarters USAF directed that active force C-5 equipped units move with aircraft to Dover AFB, Delaware.

The C-141 unit at Dover AFB, meanwhile, would transfer to Charleston AFB with its aircraft. As a result, the 300th, already training for C-5 operations, returned to the C-141 program. Meanwhile, Headquarters AFRES in concert with Headquarters USAF, restructured the entire associate program. Under the new structure, two wings would be reorganized and four wings inactivated. Essentially, the reorganization brought about a wing-squadron instead of wing-group-squadron structure. On 1 July 1973, the programming action took place and the 943d was inactivated and replaced by the concurrently activated 315th Military Airlift Wing (Associate). The 943d had a successful tenure of operation during its years at Charleston AFB. Indicative of this success was the fact that the unit won two successive Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards. The first for the period, 13 July 1970 through 30 June 1972 and the second for the period, 1 July 1972 through 30 June 1973.

On 1 April 1985, the 943d Tactical Airlift Group, under the command of Col. Clayton H. Ford, Jr., was activated at March AFB, California and assigned to the 302d Tactical Airlift Wing, Peterson AFB, Colorado to administer the collocated 303d Tactical Airlift Squadron. The 303d had converted from 8 HC-130HS to 8 C-130BS. Assigned units were the 37th Mobile Aerial Port Squadron; the 943d Consolidated Airlift Maintenance Squadron; the 943d Mobility Support Flight; and the 943d Weapons System Security Flight. Following its activation, the 943d participated in a number of significant activities. In July 1985, the 943d assisted the United States Forest Service in fire fighting efforts. The 303d C-130BS, equipped with the modular airborne fire fighting system, offloaded a total of 168,000 gallons of a fire retardant chemical mixture on fires raging over different areas of California.

The 943d also participated in the continuing Patriot Finch exercises and the Volant Oak mission. As part of the 302d Tactical Airlift Wing's support of Patriot Finch, the 943d provided flying support so the 32d Aeromedical Evacuation Group and 34th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron both at Kelly AFB, Texas, could conduct proficiency training. In October 1985, the 943d began participation in the Volant Oak mission. The mission was an airlift rotation shared on an alternating quarterly basis by the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard for the U.S. Southern Command. In November 1985, while on Volant Oak duty, the 303d Tactical Airlift Squadron flew rescue missions into Colombia which had suffered a volcano eruption. The unit carried fuel, cargo such as tents and refueling equipment, and personnel to assist in rescue operations.

In 1986, the 943d again participated in the Volant Oak rotation and in other assorted exercises. Additionally, the 37th Mobile Aerial Port Squadron came away with first place in the AFRES Patriot Rodeo held at Niagara Falls IAP, New York in July 1986. Finally, on 1 October 1986, the 943d Tactical Clinic was activated at March AFB.

The 943d Group conducted flying training missions and participated in Operation Power Pack, the transport of troops and equipment during the Dominican Republic crisis in 1965. It

transported troops into and out of Southeast Asia during airlines pilot strike in 1966 (Operation Combat Leave). During 1968, it air dropped personnel and supplies to Army Special Forces training in Utah for night counter-insurgency missions and airlifted Marine Corps personnel from California to Nevada. Between 1969 and 1973, it participated in many operations which included transporting porpoises and a Polaris missile for the US Navy in 1971, airlifting patients from the Canal Zone and islands in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean hospitals; and supporting President Nixon's meeting with Japanese Emperor Hirohito in Alaska in 1971. The 943d also provided air transport in Southeast Asia and participated in Operation Garden Plot in support of Republican and Democratic conventions in 1972. Equipped with C-5 aircraft in 1973, it trained until inactivation in 1 Jul 1973. In 1985, it was equipped with C-130H and C-130B aircraft. It deployed personnel and equipment world-wide, airlifting troops, supplies, and equipment, and performing aeromedical evacuation. The group rotated crews and aircraft to Panama in support of US operations in the Canal Zone, 1985-1993. Two C-130Bs assigned to the group were equipped with firefighting modules and supported firefighting operations in Southwestern US. It also deployed personnel in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, 1990-1991.

3/3/2008 Nearly 80 members from the 920th Rescue Wing and the 943 Rescue Group deployed from here Feb. 28 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The team of Reservists, who are deploying to the Middle East, will provide combat search and rescue operations while deployed. The deploying men and women have been preparing for months for this deployment, but Col. Robert Dunn, 943 Rescue Group commander, said his Airmen have been training for this kind of mission throughout their careers. "These men and women are every bit as thoroughly trained as their active-duty counterparts," he said. "That means they train to do more in much less time. Their commitment as Citizen Airmen is proven in their selfless, volunteer dedication. They leave behind their families, their jobs and their friends to protect the freedoms of every American. I'm very proud of each and every one of them." Family members, armed with signs, flags and tissues, gathered at the 943 Maintenance Squadron hangar to say good-bye to their loved ones before they stepped foot on the airplane. "You get kind of used to it after a while," said Ronni Curry, girlfriend of Tech. Sgt. Joshua Donnelley, who is one of the 943 members who deployed Feb. 28. "It's just another deployment, another part of his job that he has to do, but he'll be home soon." The deploying Airmen are scheduled to be gone for various durations of time in support of the Global War on Terror, but most will be deployed between three months and one year. The 943 has a long history of deployments. The unit, under various titles, has deployed nearly every year since the first Gulf War. The 943 RQG trains personnel, with equipment, to achieve and maintain the capability to perform day and night combat rescue missions; search for, locate and recover Air Force and other Department of Defense personnel involved with United States defense activities; provide search and rescue support of civilians as directed by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and provide humanitarian and disaster relief operations

3/10/2009 Members of the 943 Rescue Group here deployed March 7 to Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., to support the upcoming Space Shuttle Discovery launch mission. The Air Force Reserve rescue group deployed two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters, nine maintainers and four

pararescuemen to augment its parent unit, the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick AFB for the scheduled March 11 space shuttle launch. The Space Shuttle Discovery is set for liftoff March 11 at 9:20 p.m. EDT from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla. The Discovery crew is set to fly the S6 truss segment and install the final set of power-generating solar arrays to the International Space Station. The S6 truss will complete the backbone of the station and provide one-fourth of the total power needed to support a crew of six on the International Space Station. The helicopters were loaded onto a C-17 Globemaster III March 7 at Davis-Monthan AFB and then flown to Patrick AFB. The C-17 was from McChord AFB, Wash. The reservists are scheduled to return to Davis-Monthan AFB April 3.

The 943 Rescue Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. deployed reservists to areas outside the path of Hurricane Ike Friday, Sept 12 to support the Texas Task Force preparing for the potentially devastating storm. Hurricane Ike was expected to be a category two to three hurricane with 120 mph winds when it made landfall and was expected to affect 500 miles of shoreline off the Texas coast. The 943 RQG deployed two HH-60s, eight aircrew members and four pararescuemen. Fourteen maintainers and support Airmen also deployed on a C-130 Saturday Sept 13 to safe areas to wait out the storm and prepare to conduct search and rescue mission for victims of the hurricane. The unit joined other Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Active Duty and Coast Guard SAR units along with National Guardsmen preparing for what was expected to be a historically destructive natural disaster. The unit's mission was to locate and rescue victims of the storm. They provided medical support to victims when they were transported to safe areas determined by the Joint Personnel Recovery Center part of the Texas Task Force managing the emergency plan for the natural disaster. While the aircrew and helicopters deployed to support the victims of Hurricane Ike, the last remaining unit members of the unit's six month deployment to Afghanistan returned home. Saturday: 17 Reservists from the 943 Rescue Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. deployed to Randolph Air Force Base, Texas to support search and rescue missions for victims caught in the wake of Hurricane Ike. The Reservists were transported by an Air Force Reserve Command C-130J from the 815th Airlift Squadron from Keesler, Miss. to Texas this morning. When they arrived in Texas, they became part of the 331st Air Expeditionary Group, a joint search and rescue unit of more than 400 people, mostly Air Force and Coast Guard members and about 20 Air Force and Coast Guard HH-60 and four HC-130 based at Randolph. The Group is being lead by the Col. Steven Kirkpatrick from the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., the parent wing of the 943 RQG. Their first priority was saving lives. Military search and rescue specialists, aircraft and equipment assisted civil authorities in saving lives and preventing human suffering. The Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Active Duty, Guardsmen and Reservists and equipment provided enhanced air, land and sea search and rescue capabilities and capacities. The Airmen who deployed from the C-130 are aircraft mechanics, intelligence specialist, and ground radio specialists. They maintained the helicopters and provided critical situational awareness to the aircrew in-flight and ensure air-to-ground communication during the search and rescue operations. They deployed two pallets of equipment and supplies to sustain the mission for weeks, if needed. More than 30 Airmen from the 943 RQG have deployed and conducted rescue missions in the storm-affected Texas areas. They joined the fight with their experience

following 2005 Hurricane Katrina where they helped save 1,043 lives, including 475 people in one day. 2008

Twenty years ago at the 943rd Rescue Group reservists worked in the "Valley of the Giants." On the flight line, six Jolly Green Giant helicopters call sign Pony resided on the flight line. There these giants, more than 18 feet tall, stretching 73 feet, and more than 15 feet wide awaited the call of the 71st Special Operations Squadron. When called, these Ponies, two CH-53s and four HH-3E helicopters, weighed more than 22,000 (max) pounds, equipped with hoist (HH-3Es) and two 50 cal machine guns, used two General Electric T58-GE5 turbo shaft engines to soar to altitudes of up to 21,000 feet to traverse the terrain where angels feared to tread. Most of these helicopters were Vietnam Veterans many flying with the 20th Helicopter Squadron and the 21 Special Operations Squadron in Southeast Asia supporting Operation Pony Express before entering the Air Force Reserve fleet. Supporting this operation is how they got their call sign that is still used today with our HH-60. Then, the units four HH-3Es would soon become Operation Desert Storm Veterans as well when the unit deployed to support Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Southwest Asia in 1990 to 1991. The most famous Pony of our Vietnam Vets was the "Black Maria". Identified in official documents by its tail number 63-09676, she was built by Sikorsky Aircraft in 1963. She led a charmed life surviving 107 bullet hits and remaining ready for duty. In 1989, the Tucson Citizen wrote an article about the "Black Maria" where Lt. Col. Lester E. "Ed" Smith, Air Force Reserve pilot from the 302nd Special Operations Squadron, Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. recalled flying the Black Maria with the 20th Helicopter Squadron in Southeast Asia from 1966 to 1967. "I was one of the extremely fortunate ones," Lt. Col. Smith said. "I got shot at, but I was never in an aircraft that actually took a round through it." "During one mission, I was sitting in another helicopter on the ground as backup while 676 was delivering troops to a battle zone. We were listening to the whole thing on the radio," he said. "Black Maria" took at least three hits on that mission. One of the rounds went through the structural mount of the 'green house' (referring to the plastic canopy that covers the pilots' compartment.) It blew the "green house" out. Had the pilot been taller, he would have been hit.

"A second bullet severed an electric cable that parallels the shaft controlling the tail rotor, Lt. Col. Smith added. "It was within an inch or so of taking out the whole tail rotor system—and that would have put them in an uncontrollable situation. It was just one of those fluke situations." "Yes another round penetrated one of the main rotor blades," he continued. "Punching a 2-inch hole through it, it missed the spar (a critical area of the blade) by three inches." "When that thing came back over, you could hear it coming from about 10 miles away. It sounded like a shotgun going off every time that blade went around—Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!" he laughed at the memory. Lt. Col. Smith said, "The overall mission was pretty much like the current Special Operations mission—getting guys in to wherever—infiltration and getting them back out." Although she was charmed, the Black Maria could not have continued her duty without the help of skilled aircraft mechanics. Tech. Sgt. Henry Shaw, 943 rd MXS, now Senior Master Sgt., and Tech. Sgt. Doug Lesho now retired Senior Master Sgt. Working for NASA as an Occupational Safety and Health Specialist, after working Quality Assurance on the space shuttle Orbiter, were the last crew chiefs for the Black Maria before she was delivered to the U.S. Air

Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio in 1991. Sergeant Lesho believed the Black Maria to be one of the most reliable CH-3E helicopters as her record shows. "Being her crew chief was one of the greatest honors of my Air Force days, said SMSgt. Lesho. "Of the handful of helicopters I had the pleasure to crew, 676 was the most special to me. I was assigned as crew chief following then-TSgt. Henry Shaw. To be promoted, and assigned as crew chief to the Black Maria, was really a dream come true. I treated her like she was my own." "The CH-3E has a very special place in my heart, as does the 71st SOS and 305th RQS," he added. "Basically, I feel like I grew up with the CH-3E and the unit. I know I always thought the grass would be greener somewhere else, and complained at times... but looking back I have a very fond nostalgic feelings." SMSgt. Lesho was with the unit for 10 years. He crewed the Black Maria, and the HH-3E 67-14724 that was transferred to the Tunisian Air Force along with three other unit HH-3s helicopters from 1992 to 1995. When the unit transitioned to Rescue and the HH-60 Pavehawk in 1994, he briefly crewed 229 before being promoted to QA Chief. Also while assigned to the unit he participated in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Provide Comfort, Northern Watch, Patriot Amigo, and Patriot Cabillito, as well as many TDYs to San Diego for water work. For the unit, the saddest day with the Jolly Green Giants was March 12, 1989 when a Giant fell from a clear moonless sky during a nighttime joint training mission. Fifteen souls were lost that Sunday night. Four aircrew from the 71st Special Operations to include the unit's commander and 11 Special Forces soldiers from 5th Special Operations Group, Fort Bragg, N.C. perished when Pony 1-2, CH-3E 65-15692 helicopter went down in the an uninhabited desert 20 miles Northwest of Tucson. To honor these men who "gave all" in the service of their country, CH-3E 65-12799 Jolly Green Giant helicopter was received from the U.S. Army, Fort Rucker, Ala. and sent to the unit in pieces by the truck loads and reassembled by reservists who volunteered their time to construct the Pony 1-2 memorial static display at the DM Heritage Park. The memorial is a replica of 692 and stands to memorialize these 15 brave men's service and sacrifice for our nation's defense. The unit held a dedication service and has held memorial services every five years since then. The group will assemble March 8, 2009 in front of this Jolly Green Giant static display to honor the crew and passengers of Pony 1-2, to instill our unit heritage and uphold our promise to never forget. There are still unit members who were here 20 years ago. Mr. Dan Stutsman, Maj. Michael Williams Senior Master Sgt Henry Shaw, Senior Master Sgt. Mike Flake, Master Sgt. Chuck Ruth, Master Sgt. Tom Morris, Master Sgt. James "Smitty" Smith, Master Sgt. Lori Milner, Master Sgt. Luis Alvarez, Master Sgt. Dominic Esparza, Master Sgt. Ed Dawson and Tech. Sgt. Joy Lee, just to name a few. They can tell you what it was like to walk through the "Valley of the Giants."

943 Rescue Group Public Affairs In support of the Space Shuttle Discovery mission, the 943 Rescue Group deployed two HH-60G, nine aircraft maintainers from the 943 Maintenance Squadron, and four pararescuemen from the 306th Rescue Squadron March 7 to Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. to augment other rescue Reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing to back up the Space Shuttle launch. The helicopters and rescue Reservists deployed on a C-17 from the Air Force Reserve's 446th Airlift Wing, McChord Air Force Base, Wash. Seven additional Reservists including a pilot, a gunner, two flight engineers, a combat rescue officer, and two additional pararescuemen from the 943 Rescue Group will join them March 9. They will be providing crew

rescue support for the Space Shuttle Discovery launch and recovery. With the Space Shuttle Discovery set for liftoff on March 11 at 9:20 p.m. EDT for the STS-119 mission, the countdown clock begins at the T-43 hour mark at 7 p.m. today, March 8. Earlier today, Discovery's astronauts were scheduled fly from their home base in Houston, arriving mid-afternoon in Florida. Commander Lee Archambault will lead Discovery's crew of seven, along with Pilot Tony Antonelli, and Mission Specialists Joseph Acaba, John Phillips, Steve Swanson, Richard Arnold and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Koichi Wakata. The Discovery crew members are set to fly the S6 truss segment and install the final set of power-generating solar arrays to the International Space Station. The S6 truss will complete the backbone of the station and provide one-fourth of the total power needed to support a crew of six. The helicopters and personnel from the 943 are scheduled to return to Davis-Monthan AFB April 3.

The 943 Rescue Group became Air Force Reserve Command's newest unit when it was officially activated at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., Feb. 12. The Air Force activated the rescue group "to allow for better management efficiency of Air Force resources," said AFRC officials. They said the Air Force will continue to look for better ways to organize units and use new technologies. The group belongs to the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick AFB, Fla., and Air Force Special Operations Command is the gaining major command. Col. Michael Shook commands the group. He previously commanded the 305th Rescue Squadron, which is now part of the group. The 305th flies HH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Also in the group is the newly formed 306th RQS, which is made up of pararescue specialists who are commonly known as PJs. Other units at Davis-Monthan are the 943 Maintenance Squadron, 943 Mission Support Flight, 943 Operations Support Flight and 943 Aeromedical Flight. Another squadron of PJs is in Portland, Ore. The 304th RQS previously reported to the 920th RQW at Patrick. "As the 305th Rescue Squadron grows to become part of the 943 Rescue Group, our Citizen Airmen will continue to provide the capability of performing day and night combat rescues in hostile territories," Colonel Shook said. "When available, our combat rescue organization will offer the same local rescue support the citizens of Arizona have relied on for more than 20 years — first as the 71st Special Operations Squadron and then as the 305th Rescue Squadron." The 943 RQG traces its roots to the 943 Tactical Airlift Group, which inactivated in June 1993 at March AFB, Calif. 2005

Air Force Unit Histories
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.